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Public Values Personal Assets Over Material Possessions

PRINCETON, N.J. – The American people consider the personal aspects of their lives – their family, health, and self respect, for example – to be far more important than the possession of material goods.

In a recent Gallup survey eight in 10 participants (82%) assigned one of the top two positions on an 11-point scale to the importance of their family life. Similar proportions indicated that their physical health (81%), self respect (79%), and personal satisfaction or happiness (77%) were important to them.

On the other hand, fewer than one-fourth the respondents (22%) said that social recognition was very important in their lives (choosing one of the top two positions on the scale). Other assets earning relatively low importance ratings include: having enough leisure time (36%), having a high income (37%), and having a nice home, car, and other belongings (39%).

Between these extremes lie other social values: the freedom of choice to do what they want (73%), living up to their full potential (71%), having an interesting job (69%), having a sense of accomplishment and lasting contribution (63%), and following God's will (61%).

Ranking below the 57% average for all 19 items in the survey are: having many friends (54%), giving time to helping people in need (54%), working for the betterment of American society (51%), following a strict moral code (47%), taking part in church - or synagogue - related activities (40%).

Young Adults' Goals Vary

While there is general agreement among various age groups about the relative importance of the personal assets measured in the survey, there are some notable exceptions. For example, 62% of Americans aged 50 and older consider following a strict moral code extremely important but the figures drop to 47% of 30-49 year-olds and only 29% for those 18 to 29 years.

There is other evidence that younger people place less importance on religiously-oriented values: far fewer younger than older persons consider following God's will and being active in church or synagogue affairs to be very important to their lives.

In contrast, men and women under 30 are more inclined to place a high degree of importance on having an exciting, stimulating life and an interesting job than are persons 30 and over.

Women in the survey attach more importance to religious, ethical, and altruistic values than do men. As a case in point, helping the needy is considered very important by 60% of the women but merely 47% of the men. By the same token, following God's will is very important to two women in three (69%) compared to roughly half the male sample (53%).

Following are the national results:

Importance of Social Values

	Considered Very Important* National %
Good family life	82
Good physical health	81
Self-respect	79
Happiness, satisfaction	77
Freedom of choice	73
Living up to potential	71
Interesting job	69
Sense of accomplishment	63
Following God's will	61
Having many friends	54
Helping needy people	54
Helping better America	51
Exciting, stimulating life	51
Follow strict moral code	47
Active in church or synagogue	40
Nice home, car, etc.	39
High income	37
Enough leisure time	36
Social recognition	22

*Top 2 positions on 11-point scale

continued on next page

Using this card, please tell me how important you feel each of these is to you. (Respondents were handed a card with positions ranging from 10 to zero.) *If you think something is extremely important, you would call off the highest number, 10. If you think something is extremely unimportant you would mention the lowest number, 0. If you think something is neither extremely important nor extremely unimportant you would mention some number between 0 and 10 – the higher the number, the more important you think it is, the lower the number, the less important.*

Following are the findings by age groups:

	Considered Very Important*			
	National	18-29 years	30-49 years	50 and over
	%	%	%	%
Good family life	82	78	81	85
Good physical health	81	78	82	83
Self-respect	79	77	79	81
Happiness, satisfaction	77	79	78	75
Freedom of choice	73	72	75	70
Living up to potential	71	75	71	70
Interesting job	69	75	66	65
Sense of accomplishment	63	63	65	62
Following God's will	61	48	59	74
Having many friends	54	50	50	61
Helping needy people	54	50	52	59
Helping better America	51	45	50	56
Exciting, stimulating life	51	59	53	44
Follow strict moral code	47	29	47	62
Active in church or synagogue	40	29	38	49
Nice home, car, etc.	39	36	39	43
High income	37	38	40	34
Enough leisure time	36	36	36	36
Social recognition	22	19	22	24

*Top 2 positions on 11-point scale.

(The results reported above are based on personal interviews with 1,483 adults, 18 and older, conducted in over 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period December 11-14.)

BRITISH ALSO SEE PERSONAL ASPECTS AS MORE IMPORTANT

The British public also rates the personal aspects of their lives to be more important than the possession of material goods, as determined by a recent Gallup survey in that nation and reported in *The Sunday Telegraph*.

The findings for the U.S. and Great Britain are similar in many respects, although the British are found to attach less importance than the Americans to spiritual matters.

As in the U.S., women and older persons are more likely than men and younger persons to place importance on "following God's will", "following a strict moral code," "giving time to helping people in need," and "being active in the Church."

The following table compares the findings for the United States and Great Britain, using the same scale (the percentages indicate the combined rating of 9 and 10). Also given is the rank order of responses in the two nations:

COMPARISON: U.S., BRITAIN

	Considered very important		Rank Order	
	GB	US	GB	US
	%	%	%	%
Being in good physical health	84	81	1	2
Having a good family life	83	82	2	1
Personal satisfaction or happiness	78	77	3	4
Freedom of choice to do what I want	71	73	4	5
Having an interesting and enjoyable job	65	69	5	7
Having a good self-image or self-respect	61	79	6	3
Living up to my full potential	58	71	7	6
Having a sense of accomplishment and lasting contribution	48	63	8	8
Having many friends	48	54	8	10
Giving time to helping people in need	42	54	10	10
Following a strict moral code	42	47	10	14
Having an exciting, stimulating life	42	51	12	12
Having a nice home, car and other belongings	41	39	12	16
Following God's will	35	61	14	9
Having a high income	35	37	14	17
Working for the betterment of British (American) society	33	51	16	12
Having enough leisure time	31	36	17	18
Social recognition	19	22	18	19
Taking part in church-related activity	15	40	19	15

Remarkably High Percentage of U.S. Public Believe in Reincarnation

A remarkably high proportion of Americans, 23%, say they believe in reincarnation – that their souls at death are born in a new human body or other form of life.

Such a finding is particularly surprising in light of the fact that 9 in 10 Americans give their religious preference broadly as Christian and reincarnation is anathema to traditional New Testament doctrine.

The proportion of adults who believe in reincarnation (or the transmigration of souls) rises to 30% among persons 18 to 24 years old.

27% OF WESTERNERS HOLD BELIEF IN REINCARNATION

Belief in reincarnation is 27% among those who live in the West and drops to 16% among those who live in the Deep South. A possible reason for this regional variation may be that the West Coast is more susceptible to the influence of Eastern religions, which include reincarnation as an article of faith. In the Deep South, on the other hand, evangelical Christianity has a much stronger hold than in some other parts of the country, and reincarnation, as noted, is not part of New Testament doctrine.

Involvement in organized religion also seems to have a strong impact on this belief. About 17% of those we surveyed who attend church regularly said they believe in reincarnation, while 27% of those who do not attend regularly believe. This may be an indication that those who are going to church regularly are more likely to hear and believe traditional Christian doctrine, which denies reincarnation, than are those who rarely or never attend church services.

Following are the results:

Do you believe in reincarnation – that is, the birth of the soul in a new body after death, or not?

BELIEF IN REINCARNATION
(Adults)

	Yes	No	No Opinion
	%	%	%
NATIONAL	23	67	10
18-24 years old	30	61	9
25-29 years old	29	61	10
30-49 years old	21	68	11
50 and older	21	71	8

The same question was asked in a recent Gallup Youth Survey, with these results:

BELIEF IN REINCARNATION
(Teenagers)

Yes	27%
No	67
No opinion	6
	100%

The belief in reincarnation (or the transmigration of souls) has been held rather widely throughout the world, both among primitives and peoples of higher cultural development. According to *Man's Religions* (by John B. Noss, The Macmillan Company, 1949), reincarnation in its Indo-Aryan form runs like this: "The soul of man who dies does not, except in the single case of one who at death returns into indistinguishable oneness with Brahma, pass into a permanent state of being in heaven or hell or elsewhere; the soul, rather, is reborn into another existence which will terminate in due time and necessitate yet another birth. Rebirth follows rebirth, with the one exception named, in an endless chain."

NUMBER OF CHURCHES, MEMBERS IN U.S.

	Number of Bodies Reporting	Number of Churches	Number of Members
Buddhists	1	60	60,000
Eastern Churches	18	1,606	3,822,590
Jews*	1	3,500	5,920,000
Old Catholic, Polish National Catholic, Armenian Churches	7	436	923,985
Protestants**	184	305,273	73,479,341
Roman Catholic	1	24,188	50,449,842
Miscellaneous***	6	1,218	161,185
Totals	218	336,281	134,816,943

* Including Orthodox, Conservative and Reformed branches.

** Some bodies included here are, strictly speaking, not "Protestant" in the usual sense, such as various Latter-day Saints groups and Jehovah's Witnesses.

*** This is a grouping of bodies officially non-Christian, including those such as Spiritualists, Ethical Culture movement and Unitarian Universalists.

Source: *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1982 edited by Constant H. Jacquet, Jr. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1982.*

Record Amount Given To Religion Last Year

According to *Giving USA*, a publication of the *American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel, Inc.*, the nation's churches, synagogues and religious organizations received a record-breaking $24.85 billion in charitable contributions during 1981, a double-digit boost from the total received a year earlier.

The American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel said that contributions to religious institutions and organizations during 1981 were more than double the total received just seven years ago.

As a portion of total philanthropy in the United States, contributions to religion maintained their historic first place category by a near four-to-one margin over any other segment of the philanthropic community and equalled 46.3 percent, the same as a year before.

The annual growth rate of 12.2 percent achieved in 1981 was significantly higher than the rate of inflation, which the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics said averaged 8.9 percent for the country as a whole.

And the growth rate meant that for the first time in three years religious organizations were able to make some headway in their battle of dollar stretching for such things as salaries, equipment, program costs, utilities and building upkeep. But they were not making any gains in other battles – particularly in church attendance and membership.

Figures compiled by the National Council of Churches show that a total of 40 Protestant denominations reported total contributions of $8.8 billion and that appears to be a gain from a year earlier. But because the number of denominations that report to the NCC varies each year, a direct comparison is not possible.

The 40 communions that reported in the latest period showed an average per capita gift of $213.41 and that was up 8.1 percent from the year before.

But an even larger gain in per capita giving was shown by a control group of 12 large Protestant religions.

In an analysis of contributions made to that group, the average per capita gift jumped 13.3 percent to $201.84, a new high among the 12 major denominations.

Total contributions to those dozen major religious organizations increased as well and reached $7.9 billion, which represented an annual gain of 9.9 percent. But at the same time, membership among the 12 organizations declined by more than a million to 39.3 million, indicating that while there were fewer people giving, those that did give gave more.

While overall giving to religion rose enough in 1981 to offset losses caused by inflation and thereby solved – at least for the time being – one of the major problems faced by the nation's religious organizations, some of the other issues that have crept toward the surface in the recent past remained.

Amount Given To Religion: 1970-1981

Amount (Billions)

1970	$9.30	1976	14.22
1971	9.98	1977	16.93
1972	10.02	1978	18.45
1973	10.52	1979	20.14
1974	11.94	1980	22.15
1975	12.91	1981	24.85

(From *Giving USA*, a publication of the *American Association of Fund-raising Counsel, Inc.*)

54% GIVE POPE JOHN PAUL II 'HIGHLY FAVORABLE' VOTE

A majority of 54% give Pope John Paul II a "highly favorable" rating. This rating is based on the top two positions (plus 5 and plus 4) on a 10-point attitude scale, called the Stapel Scalometer, which measures intensity of feeling, both positive and negative.

The table shows the trend in the Pope's ratings since December, 1978. His tour of the U.S. in 1979 clearly boosted his rating, which he sustained in subsequent measurements. The June, 1981 figure may reflect, in part, sympathy for the Pope in view of his prolonged recovery from the attempt on his life.

The latest figure is based on a survey conducted in June, following the Pope's visit to Great Britain. As seen below, Catholic opinion has held firm but Protestant views have declined.

Trend In 'Highly Favorable' Rating

(Plus 5, plus 4 on 10-point scale)

	Nat.	Cath	Prot.
LATEST (June 11-14)	54%	80%	46%
(June 19-22)	65	83	60
(assassination attempt)			
May, 1980	59	85	51
October, 1979	56	80	47
(tour of U.S.)			
September, 1979	48	73	38
June, 1979	52	70	45
December, 1978	47	67	41

By way of comparison, here are the "highly favorable" ratings given previous Popes:

	Nat.	Prot.	Cath.
POPE PAUL VI (1963-1978)			
1977 (May)	37%	26%	66%
1976 (May)	25	19	48
POPE JOHN XXII (1958-1963)			
1960 (Sept.)	32%	16	76
(Aug.)	32	17	75
(July)	34	19	77
(May)	34	20	77

Sunday Activities in Canada

What's happened to Sunday in Canada? Twenty-five years ago, on a typical May Sunday, over six-in-ten Canadians watched television, listened to the radio and/or visited with friends or relatives. One-half or fewer of Canadians participate today in these activities (50%, 38% and 49%, respectively).

Just about the same proportion today as in 1957 go for a walk (24% today), or enjoy a Sunday drive (34% today); while double the number now work at their hobby at home (21% today). Participation in sports activity has soared, from about 2% a quarter of a century ago to 12% today, but about the same proportion (12% today) have to work at their job.

Church attendance, on a typical Sunday, has dropped from 53% in 1957 to 30% today, and weekly participation in church activities has followed the same pattern. The question asked over the years is:

Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?

Today's results are compared below with earlier years:

Percent Attending Church/Synagogue

	National	Catholics	Protestants
1982	35%	48%	27%
1981	37	51	29
1980	35	50	26
1970	44	65	28
1965	55	83	32
1957	60	87	43

Decreased church attendence has been accompanied by dwindling audiences to TV and radio broadcasts of religious programs. In 1975, over 7-in-10 Canadians claimed to listen or watch these broadcasts regularly (28%) or occasionally (44%). Today half that proportion do, comparable figures being 9% and 28%, respectively.

A more positive outlook towards religion appears to be emerging, however. This question has been asked over the past 25 years:

At the present time, do you think that religion is increasing its influence on Canadian life or losing its influence?

As the following table shows, between 1957 and 1968, there was a sharp drop-off in the proportion of Canadians who felt religious influence was increasing. Since then, there has been a slow, but steady increase in the number of Canadians holding this belief. Opinions of Roman Catholics and of Protestant Canadians differ only slightly on this question.

Influence of Religion on Canadian Life

	Increasing	Losing	No Change	Don't Know
- 1982	33%	46%	14%	7%
- 1979	24	53	17	6
- 1977	22	61	13	4
- 1975	18	69	8	5
- 1968	12	68	13	7
- 1962	25	37	27	11
- 1957	45	28	17	10

72% HOLD FAVORABLE VIEW OF BILLY GRAHAM

A recent nationwide Gallup survey shows 72% of Americans holding a favorable opinion of evangelist Billy Graham, compared to 23% who hold an unfavorable opinion.

Persons in the survey were asked to rate Graham on a 10-point scale called the Stapel Scalometer, which measures intensity of opinion, both positive and negative.

The trend, going back to 1963, shows little change in the overall ratings given Graham on the scale, although there has been a slight but continuing downtrend in the percentage of Graham "enthusiasts" – those who give Graham a "highly favorable" rating (the top two positions on the scale, plus 5 and plus 4).

The latest survey was conducted in mid-June, following Graham's controversial trip to Moscow.

	+5 %	+4 %	+3 %	+2 %	+1 %	Don't know %	- 1 %	- 2 %	- 3 %	- 4 %	- 5 %
1982	18	11	14	12	17	5	7	3	3	3	7
1981	22	12	19	11	14	5	5	3	2	2	5
1978	26	12	15	10	14	5	5	3	2	2	6
1977	31	10	18	10	11	6	4	2	3	1	4
1976	32	10	17	9	13	5	4	2	3	1	4
1973	36	12	14	7	10	6	4	1	3	1	6
1972	40	12	18	8	9	3	3	2	1	1	3
1969	45	11	15	8	9	3	2	2	2	1	2
1963	27	14	15	10	11	11	5	1	2	1	3

Americans More Confident in Church Than Most in International Survey

Overall, America has more confidence in its institutions than Europe, with the exception of the legal system, as determined by a major survey on values undertaken by the Amsterdam-based European Values Systems study group.

In Europe, the police were rated the highest of 10 institutions in terms of the percentage placing "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in them, with Britain and Ireland showing the greatest confidence (86%) in their police. The armed forces came second to the police in Europe in general, whereas in America they were rated first (81%) with the police coming second.

In America, lowest confidence was found in major companies (50%), the press (49%), and labor unions (33%), and Europe rated these three institutions the same way. Japan placed much more confidence in its legal system than both America and Europe.

Overall, the Church was rated about midway in both America and Europe, but was rated the lowest in Japan. But when attention is focused only on those institutions in which Americans place "a great deal" of confidence, the Churches and organized religion head the list.

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

Percentage of Respondents Claiming Confidence in Different Institutions.

	* US	GB	IR	JP	EUR	WG	F	I	SP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Police	76	86	86	67	71	71	64	68	63
The Armed Forces	81	81	75	37	60	54	53	58	61
The Legal System	51	66	57	68	57	67	55	43	48
The Education System	65	60	67	51	55	43	55	56	50
The Church	75	48	78	16	52	48	54	60	50
Parliament-Congress	53	40	51	30	43	53	48	31	48
The Civil Service	55	48	54	31	40	35	50	28	38
Major Companies	50	48	49	25	39	34	42	33	37
The Press	49	29	44	52	32	33	31	46	31
Labor Unions	33	26	36	29	32	36	36	28	31

* Headings: *United States, Great Britain, Ireland, Japan, Europe, West Germany, France, Italy, Spain.*

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